United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Delegations from Greece and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia meet in New York under auspices of Special Representative; agree to begin direct discussions to resolve differences on 28 September.

+ Secretary-General, on a two-day visit to Canada, meets with Prime Minister and senior officials; Prime Minister announces $13 million contribution to humanitarian relief in Haiti.

+ Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations chairs meeting of UNPROFOR troop-contributing countries in Zagreb; to travel to Sarajevo, Skopje and Belgrade tomorrow.

+ Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in letter to Secretary-General, asks that Security Council sanctions against it be lifted by "fast-track" procedure; says it has made every effort to help peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ Head of Civil Affairs for UNPROFOR visits Bosnian town of Mostar -- first United Nations access in almost three months; UNHCR warns of new wave of "ethnic cleansing" by Bosnian Croat forces.

+ Libya, in letter to Secretary-General, expresses indignation at Security Council's maintenance of sanctions against it; says it has spared no effort to comply with international law; stresses readiness to negotiate with parties concerned and with Council to solve crisis.

+ Inter-Agency Humanitarian Needs Assessment Mission begins three-week visit to Zaire; will focus on regions with concentrations of internally displaced people.

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Delegations from Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia met today in New York under the auspices of the Secretary-General's Special Representative Cyrus Vance, according to a United Nations spokesman. Both

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parties agreed to begin direct discussions on a continuing basis in Mr. Vance's presence in New York on 28 September, to be followed by a visit by the Special Representative to Athens and Skopje.

The direct discussions would mark a new phase in efforts to resolve the differences between the parties, in accordance with Security Council resolution 845 (1993), the spokesman said. That resolution urged the two parties to continue their efforts to resolve their differences -- which have centred on the use of the name "Macedonia" -- before the commencement of the forty-eighth session.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, on a two-day visit to Canada, today attended the opening ceremony of the annual Congress of the Canadian Bar Association in Quebec City and was awarded an honorary doctorate degree by the University of Laval. The Secretary-General also had meetings with Canada's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and with the Premier of Quebec, and was expected to return to New York this evening.

Upon his arrival in Canada yesterday, the Secretary-General met in Montreal with Prime Minister Kim Campbell. The Prime Minister later announced in a joint press conference that Canada would contribute $13 million to humanitarian relief in Haiti. The Secretary-General said that sanctions against Haiti would be suspended as soon as the Haitian Parliament had confirmed the new Prime Minister, permitting an aid programme for economic development to get underway immediately.

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Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations Kofi Annan today chaired a meeting in Zagreb of countries contributing troops to the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). Representatives of countries expressing an interest in making new contributions to the operation also participated in the meeting, which will continue tomorrow.

Mr. Annan began a five-day visit to the UNPROFOR area of operations yesterday, when he met with senior Headquarters staff and with regional representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Tomorrow, Mr. Annan will visit Knin and Korenica and will then travel to Sarajevo, Skopje and Belgrade.

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The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) has asked Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to identify precisely what obligations imposed on it under Security Council resolutions 752 and 757 (1992) have not yet been met. In a letter to the Secretary-General dated 16 August, Prime Minister Radoje Kontic also asked that sanctions imposed in terms of resolution 820 (1993) be lifted "following a fast-track procedure". The

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Federal Republic had complied with the requirements before the deadline, and the contents of the resolution had been "completety superseded by developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina", he said.

Mr. Kontic wrote that the Federal Republic had contributed to efforts to end the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina from the outset. Regrettably, his country had not been successful, nor, he pointed out, had the international community or the Security Council. The Federal Republic was making every effort to help achieve peace and a just solution of the conflict. Despite this, its repeated official requests to the Security Council that sanctions be lifted had received no reply and no action had been taken to that effect.

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Cedric Thornberry, the Head of Civil Affairs for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), on Saturday visited the Muslim area of Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina, an area that had been closed to the United Nations and humanitarian agencies for almost three months. Mr. Thornberry met with local representatives of the Bosnian Presidency in order to address the severe humanitarian problems of the 55,000 people living in the left bank area of Mostar. He said that UNPROFOR, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian agencies could do much to alleviate civilian suffering if the parties agreed to a least a minimum of cooperaton and good will.

In a separate development, UNHCR today expressed alarm over recent reports of detentions, harassment and widespread forced displacement of thousands of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Bosnian Croat forces. Reports from people fleeing southwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina pointed to a new campaign of "ethnic cleansing" as brutal as any so far witnessed. Up to 15,000 Muslim men were now believed to be held in detention centres guarded by Bosnian Croat forces, reportedly in extremely poor conditions.

The UNHCR described the incidents as "only the latest in a long line of human rights abuses allegedly committed by all sides in the conflict", adding that it had also received reports of abuses by Bosnian Government forces against Croats in the Zenica area of central Bosnia, including several cases of looting and vandalism that were largely ignored by local police.

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Saying it has spared no effort to comply with international law, Libya has expressed strong indignation that the Security Council would maintain sanctions against it despite the divergence of views apparent in recent Council consultations. In a letter to the Secretary-General dated 17 August, Libya said it was prepared to negotiate with the parties concerned and with the Council in order to reach a peaceful solution to the crisis. The letter asked the Secretary-General and the Council to establish a mechanism for reaching a mutual understanding of what Council resolution 731 (1992) required and of what measures Libya had taken to meet those requirements.

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Libya said it was "astonishing" that France, the United Kingdom and the United States had set a time-limit of a matter of weeks for the resolution of a problem of such proportions. On 13 August, the three Council members said they would seek to strengthen sanctions against Libya if it failed to comply with resolutions 731 and 748 (1992) by 1 October, which required that Libya transfer to United States or United Kingdom jurisdiction the suspects in the Lockerbie bombing and comply with French requests relating to the bombing of UTA flight 772.

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An Inter-Agency Humanitarian Needs Assessment Mission has arrive in Kinshasa, Zaire, to begin assessing urgent humanitarian requirements and identifying ways to address them, particularly in the regions where there are concentrations of internally displaced people. The Mission, led by Darko Silovic of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, is expected to complete its work within three weeks.

The Mission includes representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Besides the Kinshasa area, they are planning to visit the provinces of Shaba, Nord Kivu and West and East Kasai.

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